

Proceedings
of
THE TRAVANCORE SRI MULAM ASSEMBLY.

(OFFICIAL REPORT.)

THIRD ASSEMBLY.

FIRST SESSION—1944/1120.

Monday the 21st August 1944/6th Chingom 1120.

The Assembly re-assembled on the 21st August 1944/6th Chingom 1120 at 12 of the Clock in the Legislative Chamber, Public Offices, with Sachivottama Sir. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Dewan of Travancore, in the Chair.

NEW MEMBERS.

The following members took the oath and signed the rolls:

- (1) MR. C. P. GOPALA PANICKER : (*Secretary to Government.*)
- (2) MR. C. KUMARA DAS : (*Secretary to Government.*)
- (3) MR. K R. NARAYANA AIYAR (*Additional Secretary to Government and Director of food Supplies.*)
- (4) RAO BAHADUR T. V. VENKITESWARA AIYAR : (*Conservator of Forests.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Vanchi Poor Fund.

83. *MR. K. A. MATHEW (*Tiruvalla*): Will the Government be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have any connection with the Vanchi Poor Fund;

(b) whether the Government have made any contribution to the Fund; and

(c) whether the Government by their circulars or by other means have authorised any of their subordinates or non-officials having dealings with the Government to collect subscriptions for this Fund?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : (*Chief Secretary to Government*): (a) The fund is vested in the Treasurer of Charitable Endowments under Section (iv) of the Charitable Endowments Act II of 1082.

(b) Yes.

(c) No.

MR. K. A. MATHEW : May I know from the honourable member the extent of contribution of Government towards this Fund?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : Government contribution up to the end of December 1943 amounts to Rs. 1,11,976-3 chs-9 c.

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MR. K. A. MATHEW : May I know from the honourable member whether any officers have subscribed to this Fund?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : Very many persons, including officials and non-officials have subscribed to this fund.

MR. K. A. MATHEW : I did not hear the honourable member.

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : Subscriptions to the Fund consist of voluntary contributions and donations made by officials, as well as non-officials.

MR. K. SUKUMARAN (*Nominated*) : May I know from the honourable member the object with which the Fund has been instituted?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : The Fund has been instituted in aid of the poor. Noon-day meals are given to poor children studying in schools. 1039 school children in the City of Trivandrum are given mid-day meals daily. In the year 1119, 2,10,259 persons were fed in the Annadana Bhavan at a cost of Rs. 17,442.

MR. K. SUKUMARAN : May I know from the honourable member whether the State Congress, which, according to them stands for the betterment of the poor and the destitute, has contributed towards the Fund?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : I am not aware of any, Sir.

MR. M. L. JANARDANAN PILLAI (*Nominated*) : May I know from the honourable member whether the Government have contributed towards other similar charitable institutions like the Y. M. C. A?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : Government are giving donations and contributions to many similar charitable Institutions. The contribution made by the Government proceeds on the principle that the institution will get from the Government one-third of its collections from other sources, the total collections of the Fund from the public being Rs. 4,36,569. Government have given the amount I have already referred to. And the same offer has been made in favour of another similar institution at Alleppey.

MR. K. SUKUMARAN : May I know from the honourable member whether great persons outside the State like Sir Maurice Gwyer have passed any remarks on the Vanchi Poor Fund?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : Yes, Sir. Very appreciatory remarks have been made.

MR. M. L. JANARDANAN PILLAI : May I know from the honourable member the contribution which the Dewan has made in his personal capacity?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : He has subscribed Rs. 15,000.

MR. PULIYOOR T. P. VELAYUDHAN PILLAI (*Thiruvella*) : May I know from the honourable member whether the donations made by the officers are free and voluntary contributions in their personal capacity?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : There is no warrant for any other inference, Sir.

MR. K. K. CHELLAPPAN PILLAI (*Mavelikara cum Kunnathur*): May I know from the honourble member whether the Private Secretary to the Dewan is conducting the Fund?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI: He is the honorary Treasurer.

MR. K. R. NARAYANAN (*Nominated*): സർ, ഇതിനു തിരുവിതാംകൂറിനു വെളിയിൽനിന്നും ആരെങ്കിലും സംഭാവന ചെയ്തിട്ടുണ്ടോ?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI: Rs. 1,29,566 has been donated by non-Travancoreans.

MR. K. K. CHELLAPPAN PILLAI: May I know whether the Government are aware that his connection with the Fund as the Treasurer has a demoralising effect?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI: I repudiate very strongly the insinuation contained in the question.

PRESIDENT: Order, order. The discussion has gone on enough already and unless the honourable member has any further facts to elicit, no question shall be put.

MR. A. R. SULAIMAN SAIT (*Commerce and Industry North*): May I know whether the Government are aware that the Cochin Government have recently made a donation of Rs. 4 lakhs to an institution which contributes free mid-day meals to starving children?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI: Government are aware of that.

PRESIDENT: Order, order. As the name of the Private Secretary to the Dewan of Travancore has been dragged into this debate, in my opinion, maliciously, it is my duty to make a statement on this occasion.

The question of the problem of beggars had been engaging the attention of Government for a considerable time. Government were asked to legislate penalising beggary. They came to the conclusion that it would be uncharitable and harmful if legislation penalising beggary were initiated unless the able-bodied were given some work to do so as to earn their livelihood and unless the destitute and helpless ones were fed or otherwise maintained. His Highness the Maharaja, on the occasion of the assumption of his Exalted Office as the Ruler of this State, made a contribution to the Destitutes' Home. It was found that the contribution touched only the fringes of the problem. It became necessary to start a more comprehensive scheme. Fortunately we found that at Kottayam a scheme of this kind had been started and was working most successfully, thanks to the efforts, amongst others of my friends, Messrs. George and K. K. Kuruvilla. Inspired by their example and in pursuance of the scheme of Government, the Government came to the conclusion that at least as a first experiment in Trivandrum town, the problem of beggary should be expeditiously solved. A census of the beggars in Trivandrum was taken, a certain number was found to be able-bodied and able to work, while a certain number was found to consist of cripples and persons who could not possibly maintain themselves. And therefore, it was necessary to collect funds for the purpose

of dealing with the problem. This was not really a Government function, it was a function for private philanthropy, but private philanthropy in Travancore had not been canalised into any organisation because it was mainly personal in character. For this reason, an appeal was made and subscriptions flowed in. It would be false and mischievous to assert that the slightest influence was exerted. As a matter of fact, persons asking for favours, persons asking for registration of land in the north of Travancore, persons asking for cardamom facilities, have written to the Dewan stating that they were going to make a handsome donation to the Vanchi Poor Fund. Whenever a person asks for an appointment, the last clause of the letter has something to do with the Vanchi Poor Fund. I have made it a rule and it has been circulated to all the districts that when any person asking for either registry or lease of land, or an appointment, subscribed to the Fund, that subscription is rejected; and not only that, that appointment or that request for any other matter is not accepted. That rule has been and will be strictly enforced.

Now, it was found that it was necessary to have a person who could devote practically the whole of his time to keeping the accounts. Moneys are collected to be accounted for in heaven, as Maulana Shaukat Ali said on one occasion in regard to the Khilafat funds. But in regard to the Vanchi Poor Fund, I thought that the accounts should be rendered on the earth itself and not in heaven, and I came to the conclusion that the best person was one in whom I had absolute confidence. Therefore I asked the Private Secretary to be the Treasurer of this Fund. There is no room to suspect that the Private Secretary's connection induces large donations. But there is no doubt that the Dewan of Travancore is vitally and personally interested in the success of this matter and will try and exert every nerve to see that more and more money comes into this Fund. The Dewan is not ashamed to say so because this is the first step towards bringing into effect what is called the State-wide beggary relief. This Government have not gone round the State asking for contributions for this purpose or that. I do not want to draw comparisons. This is the only public appeal that has been made and it is on behalf of the beggars of Travancore. And I repeat, with all the emphasis at my command, the purpose and intention that obviously underlie this question and I regard it as being prompted by definite and personal malice.

MR. K. A. MATHEW : May I know whether the Chief Secretary is not competent to explain the Government's policy?

PRESIDENT : I am also competent and I have also the right:

MR. K. A. MATHEW : You are speaking in your capacity as the Dewan I suppose.

MR. K. K. CHELLAPPAN PILLAI : May I say a word in explanation. Sir. My remarks were never meant as personal insinuations. It is just the effect on the public that I voiced and I hope it is the same intention that impelled the Dewan also to speak.

PRESIDENT : If honourable members say that they were not animated by such object, I am willing to accept the statement at its full face value and act upon that explanation.

Vanchi Poor Fund.

84. ***MR. A. P. UDAYABHANU** (*Karunagapalli cum Kartikapalli*) : Will the Government be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is with the assent of the Government that the provision is made in the rules of the Vanchi Poor Fund that the local committees of the Fund should have on them the local Tahsildars and the Inspectors of Police; and

(b) whether it is one of the functions of the committees to collect funds?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : (a) & (b) The Government are not aware of any such rule.

MR. K. A. MATHEW : As a matter of fact the committee contains some Tahsildars. Is that not a fact?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : In some committees they are also members like others.

MR. A. P. UDAYABHANU : Have they the permission of Government to be members?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : No permission is required, Sir.

MR. K. A. MATHEW : Does not the Government realise that the presence of the Police and other officials has some effect on the workings of the Fund?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : No pressure is brought to bear upon any body by the officials.

PRESIDENT : I am surprised at the question. If really pressure was brought to bear upon the people, I am sure that the collections would have been not three lakhs but thirty or forty lakhs. Supposing the Government wanted to exercise pressure they could have easily collected even Rs. 50 lakhs. The fact that Tahsildars are in the committees does not mean that they are bringing pressure to bear upon any body. As a matter of fact, a certain Tahsildar who tried to exercise pressure for the purpose of benefiting himself and incidentally using the name of the Vanchi Poor Fund in order to exculpate himself was very rigorously punished on that account.

MR. M. L. JANARDHANA PILLAI : May I know whether in each one of these committees there are prominent non-officials?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : Yes, Sir. There are very respectable and important non-officials on each one of these committees.

MR. M. L. JANARDHANA PILLAI : Is there any instance in which it was noticed that Police Inspectors were using their influence?

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : There is not a single case like that.